

# ROB MCGREGOR

## A TALE OF TENNESSEE

By Martha McCulloch Williams

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"Yes—no—I don't hardly know. You've got me puzzled with your fine talk. But I'll tell you plain just what an how I stand with her. I been there this mornin'; found her so took up with her parcel of nasty little turkeys I couldn't scarcely get it over with her. She 'peared mighty bright, though, sorter on edge, as you may say. So I waited, talkin' to the ole man, until I seen her slip off out the p'ar tree. Then I chased off arter her; found her flingin' sticks on rocks up in 'em an' p'ars just rakin' down at every throw she made. Then she up an' said how lazy she was—any industrious body'd elvish an' pick the fruits unbrused, as they was for p'serves. Then I up an' said I'd git up there, though I wa'n't quite er boy, an' she laughed real tantalin' an' said she couldn't let the father er a family risk herself that way. Then she kep' on throwin' an' set me to pick up what she knocked down. An' laugh! You oughter er heard her when them fruits come dancin' an' hoppin' over my bald head. But arter a bit she says:

"Let's go in the grape arbor an' rest. I'm 'fraid you'll have apoplexy. I can't have your death on my conscience."

"So in we went an' set on the two turf benches, her one side, me the other. She had her ap'ra full er p'ars an' flung one over ter me, sayin':

"Have er p'ar, Mr. Topmark. I'm shore you've earned it."

"Then I sorter alinged round ter lettin' on I wanted another sort er p'ar, an' she flung up her head an' laughed an' said:

"Oh, Mr. Topmark, jest fer change, now, s'pose you was ter talk sense ter me! I know it would improve your health."

"Oh, says I, 'then you want talk business; I'm agreeable. Jest you fire er way."

"An' she says, lookin' over my head, 'I can't talk your sort business, 'cause I ain't got none er my own, an' other folks is clean out er the question."

"Why, says I, 'everybody thinks you've got er heap er business—heap too much fer er pretty young thing like you."

"An' then she held up her hand, sayin': 'Stop! I want business, I'm beginnin' an' sellin' an' payin' debts. Now, nothin' ter buy right now, thank God, next ter nothin' ter sell since the colt was stole an' not er debt in the world. In fact, I can't git in debt. Nobody'd trust me for 10 cents. They know they couldn't tetch the land fer it—that's all we've got—an' I'd shoot the man that would name sale er mortgage ter daddy."

"You oughter be rich with all this land," says I. "Wouldn't you like ter be? It's worth er fortune er it was managed right."

"Then she thought er minit an' flung her arms over her head, sayin': 'Yes, I do want money, er heap er it, enough to make some rascals suffer an' give daddy an' the dogs an' all the black folks er good time."

"You ain't namin' nothin' fer yourself," says I. "Shorely you want some o' it; it ain't no mo'n fine weddin' clothes."

"An' then she laughed—she's jest like quicksilver—an' says she: 'Oh, Mr. Topmark, Mr. Topmark, how can you tantalize me so! You know er ever I fall in love with anybody I'll be shore ter have mothers an' sisters an' cousins an' aunts that'll hate me on the face er earth. They'll eben hate the ground I walk on; so I'll have ter dry up inter the ugliest little ole maid. I reckon I'll blow away in the end. Then ain't no chance er me dyin', like anybody ought when they're decayed in love. You ought ter be sorry fer me instid er makin' me sorry fer myself."

"No, I'm sorry fer myself," says I. "You've done saved me er every tetch, but I bound ter say er follow that could git you wouldn't mind of all the other women in the world was mad enough ter die over it."

"I oughter say thank you, sir," says she. "But I thought we'd agreed ter talk sense."

"Oh, no," says I. "It was business, an' whether er no, I mean ter tell you my comin' here so much means business." Then I dropped on my knees an' tried ter git er hold er her hand, but she jumped eross er flung er handful er them p'ar fruits right in my face. One er 'em was so meller it stunk on the end er my nose, an' when she seen that she laughed till she cried. But soon she set her head up, an' says she in her high way:

"I don't want er seem inhospitable, Mr. Topmark, but you must know that you can never have anything ter say ter me that would not be better said where all the world might hear it. Good day, sir! I can't ask you in the house, I have got er heap er other things ter do. And with that she left me an' I moid I couldn't see straight, not knowin' hardly whether I'd rather kill her er ask her ter walk on me."

"It must have tried your temper—such impertinence," Mr. Howell said, yet laughed behind his hand at the thought of Mr. Topmark with the pear on his nose. "Pardon me if I seem impertinent," he went on, "but you had better tell me your whole mind toward the other one. Miss Magnolia Tubbs is not bad looking, but she impresses me as being—well, a trifle haughty an' more than a trifle skittish."

"You're right. But she's got her match—that's that. No, she's the devil. Besides, he's got the upper hand. The gal's been unforgotten. That's er child, you see. Till I found that out that night er been two choices fer me. No gracious wouldn't have the land as er gracious gift, so she—Magnolia—er crazy ter git money. Say, you go right over ter Roscoe tomorrow mornin'. Ask fer the ole man. If you insist you won't talk wunner's anything. But don't tell him. Talk ter her. Don't beat about the bush. Say right out how I've been asked ter take the case an' how I've tried ter keep you from tetchin' it an' only give in after you promised ter try an' compromise. Name er whoppin' big sum. Say \$5,000, though I'll git the thing settled fer \$2,000. Say I begun an' plead with you ter let the ole man at least live out his days in peace, an' you'd like ter do

it, only business is business, an' you ain't the only lawyer."

"One would think I was hardly a lawyer from the minuteness of your instructions," Mr. Howell said, bringing his chair down upon all its four legs. "I think I can be trusted with the diplo-

"In just so many words the facts is these," Mr. Topmark said: "Roscoe land was took up from gov'ment survey with money her father had give that ole woman, Naomi Pickins, when she got married. Ef she ever j'ined in the deeds ter the McGregors, that ain't no papers ter records ter prove, though the McGregors say she did do it. But this only

want it, Miss Rob, but, Lott, not half, not er hundredth part, as bad as I want you. Now, don't you try ter stop me. You sent for me, remember. I got er right ter speak. I know you don't keer nothin' in the world er arter me, an' I'm er fool ter keep on arter you like I do. I ain't no handsome young sprig ter take your fancy. No, other I ain't er p'ison snake. So you jest say you'll eben consider me, an' I pledge you my word you shan't have no mo' trouble with this here rascally gang!"

"Thank you, but that is wholly impossible," Rob said, a deep scarlet staining her pallid face. "So impossible," she went on, "we will forget what you have said."

"What makes it impossible?" Topmark asked doggily.

Rob shivered faintly, then drew back, saying, "The fact that I am myself and you yourself."

"You're the only woman round here I couldn't have for the asking," Mr. Topmark began in his most aggrieved voice. In spite of her deep trouble, Rob broke into a laugh and answered gaily: "I have not the least doubt of it. Dear Mr. Topmark, do go and take one of them. You don't know how gaily I shall feel if I think myself the occasion of so excellent a husband going to waste."

Her laughing provoked Mr. Topmark beyond words, more than even her stand- ing refusal of himself. She could thus whistle him and his money down the wind with ruin starting her in the face. It must be she did not realize what she was about. He had spoken fair words. Now he must try what virtue lay in rough ones.

"You say you love your ole father," he began. "That won't be many ter believe that when they see him in the pookhouse an' know you could er kept him out er it."

"Perhaps," Rob said, though she got white to the lips. "But it seems to me, Mr. Topmark, we had better say no more. We are not likely to agree, and it is utterly foolish to quarrel."

"We must agree on something er else it'll be the worst day's work was ever done fer you an' him," Mr. Topmark almost shouted. "You think, I reckon, other help will come. I tell you it won't, it shan't. I can give you er name as will show that every door in the country is your face. Now, take your choice—be my wife, have all the life I can give er else the road an' the world lookin' at you as the dust under my feet! Choose quick too. As you've tried me long enough."

"Choice is impossible," Rob said, her face white and scornful, "since nothing else on earth could be to me so hard, so degrading, so entirely unbearable, as even the contemplation for one minute of being your wife."

Mr. Topmark swung upon his heel and came face to face with Aunt Pheny, who had been standing just outside the grape arbor throughout the interview. The old woman was still speechless. Otherwise she showed no sign of the cowardly midnight attack. Rob had almost forced her to come and share Mam Liza's house in a corner of the yard. She had been shelling peas in the arbor while Rob talked with the lawyer that morning. Now she stood looking at Mr. Topmark with the eye of a basilisk. Three she nodded at him, then raised her hand and pointed him away.

"Out er my way, you ole witch!" he shouted, rushing past her. Rob had snuck, shaken and breathless, upon the turf seat within. The old woman went to her and softly stroked her head, then took the girl's face between her two hands and looked into the eyes as though she tried to comfort her.

A tall shadow fell across the sunny door. Jack Talbot came through it and sat down beside Rob, saying:

"My mysterious passenger sent you a message, Rob—a message more mysterious than even hisself. He bade me say to you, 'Darkness is coming, with light behind.' What do you make of that? Do you think he was crazy?"

"I hope not," Rob said, trying to speak steadily. "The darkness has come, Jack, quickly enough. Let us hope the light will follow."

Before Jack could answer Aunt Pheny caught Rob's hand and kissed it, with smiles all over her deeply wrinkled face.

Fate sometimes disposes of her mightiest men by means of trifles light as air. Not that Miss Winford was a trifle. Perish the thought! But if Lawyer Howell had not chosen to ride about just when and where he did, he would certainly not have encountered her and under—But let the event be duly chronicled.

The lawyer rode, soliloquizing, half alone. "George, but Topmark is a jolly fool! He thinks he can tame that pretty piece of pride. Confound it! I wish I had not seen her. I want to throw her in the case when I think of her eyes. Of course I shall not do it. But who without seeing her would ever understand Topmark's infatuation? The wonder is that, having seen her, I no longer wonder over it. She might be dangerous to me, only she sees too far into me. Then there is that stubborn fact—Jack Talbot. Only a fool would overlook him. But the other one, Topmark's niece—she's almost as astonishing, considering the stock she springs from. What a way she has! It was worth a lot to see how she cooed and purled the other night. I

might think of calling Fare, only I hope to get out of this tomorrow at the latest."

Sound of other hoofs here made him slacken speed. His road ran into another track of the intervening point he saw. Miss Winford, mounted upon the tall, gray, family horse, with Major, a scrap of black boy, up behind. At sight of Mr. Howell he set up an atrocious snigger, crying aloud: "Miss Alice! Miss Alice! Dar do'vey man Marce Ben took'n foich ter we all's house t'urrr night, do man from town mammy say she's p'et gwine out out all your yother beans."

"You, Major, hush, this minute!" Miss Winford said, her face taking on a brick dust hue. She had taken stock of Mr. Howell upon their first encounter, and her mind was made up that, failing Jack Talbot, she could do no better than marry him. She was unfeignedly glad of the chance that threw him in her way, but maiden modesty, as she understood it, forbade her to seem conscious of his presence until unconsciousness was no longer possible. Even after that had exchanged greetings she kept a distant front toward him until he drew directly beside her, saying, with a lazy laugh:

"Miss Winford, you must be here as a direct answer to prayer. I was thinking of you, and, behold, I look up and see you!"

"Oh, indeed! Now, I wonder what you were thinking of poor me unless you were wondering how you managed to talk to such a little goose," Miss Winford said, with an arch lift of her brows.

"What a slander!" laughed the lawyer, and at once rode on beside her. He was in the humor to see what was under and within this nudulant plumpness. The girl lacked fascination wholly, but he seemed to discern in her a quality of subtle subservience which might mean much to a career such as he had mapped out for himself.

Still, nothing might have come of it but for Major, though he was the unlikely possible Cupid. "Dat boy, he dest got ter be mean er bust," his mother habitually said of him, and just now he was ill content with the estate in which he found himself. There was small chance for mischief riding thus with six inches of Miss Winford's immaculate and starched pink shoulders—unless, that is, one had Major's genius for it. By the time they had gone a mile in Mr. Howell's company the lad had found a long pin which he recalled having hidden that morning somewhere in his woolly crown. Next minute he had thrust it into old gray so sharply that each other animal gave a great bound, and Miss Winford lay in a heap upon the road.

Major was there, too, a moaning lump of arms and legs. But Mr. Howell took no thought of him. He knelt beside Miss Winford, noting even in that distracted minute how firmly the neat flaxen braids sat in place. As he slid an arm beneath her head she opened her eyes and gasped faintly. "Water, water!" then collapsed against the arm from whose support she had chastely withdrawn herself.

"Water, water!" Major echoed in precisely the key.

"Shut up! You are not hurt, you monkey!" Mr. Howell said masterfully. "I does bleeds I kin walk," Major answered, with a grin; then, darting nimbly to the roadside: "Dest you run ter Miss Alice, Mr. Man! I gwine fetch er whole bucketful er water soon as fetch I git back from Unc' Joe Tom's house."

As he vanished Mr. Howell looked down at the round cheek against his shoulder. It was soft and smooth, trebly tempting to lips lacking the charm of love. He stooped and kissed it. Then instantly the pale eyes opened with a glance that he could not misread. He had met artifice and cunning fit to cope with his own. He smiled a little behind his mustache and said as he led her horse to the roadside, where she stood ready to remount:

"That was a lucky oversight. Without it we might have wasted six months in coming to an understanding."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

**Rheumatism Quickly Cured.**

After having been confined to the house for eleven days and paying out \$25 in doctor bills without benefit, Mr. Frank Dolson of Saint Ste. Marie, Mich., was cured by one bottle of Chamberlain's Pain Balm, costing 25 cents and has not since been troubled with that complaint. For sale by A. R. Fisher, Druggist.

**MATTINGLY.**

Held over from last week.

More rain, more rest.

Some of the Democrats are on the sick list.

Times, Riley, Tar Fork, left for Texas, last week.

Pad Bates has gone to Mattoon, Ill., where he will work this year.

Miss Sallie Perkins, Beech Fork, gave us a short visit, last week.

Miss Maggie Hamilton and her little niece, Mamie Hawkins, were in town, Thursday.

W. C. Taul, Beech Fork, was through this community, last week, purchasing young cattle.

Are you reading "Rob McGregor" in the News? If you are not, you are missing a good thing.

Misses Ida and Esther Frank visited at Far Fork, Saturday and Sunday. They were guests of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Rice.

Misses Effie Hamilton and Bessie Oum; Messrs. M. E. Hamilton and James Taul visited on Beech Fork, Saturday and Sunday.

The Democrats have a complete ticket of popular candidates, and they are going to make the "Pube" think of old times in November.

Wick Barbee, formerly of Cloverport, now of this place, will cultivate his uncle Wm. Howard's farm, on Clover Creek, this year. Wick says he will keep batch.

Yes, you think confidence is restored and times are improving rapidly since the inauguration, for there was a gentleman from Clover Creek, in this community, a few days ago, offering \$3 per month for a first-class farm hand.

**NASAL CATARRH CATARRH**

is a LOCAL DISEASE and is the result of colds and sudden climatic changes.

This remedy does not contain mercury or any other injurious drugs.

**ELY'S CREAM BALM**

Opens and cleans the Nasal Passages, Allays Pain and Inflammation, Heals and Protects the Membrane from Colds, Restores the sense of Taste and Smell. Is quickly absorbed. Gives relief at once by snuff or by rubbing on the nostrils.

45c BOTTLES, 25c BOTTLES, 10c BOTTLES.

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You will find the WEEKLY POST-DISPATCH well readable during the year 1897. The year 1897 is going to be a year of great interest. The coming of the McKinley Administration, with a new Congress, elected up a gold piece for means legislation of a kind that will vitally interest every newspaper reader in the country, and especially in the West and South. Special attention will be paid to the WEEKLY POST-DISPATCH. This is shown in the fact that in Missouri and in every other locality where the POST-DISPATCH has a large circulation, the gains of Democracy and free silver were of a sweeping character.

The POST-DISPATCH deserves the support of all Free Silver Democrats because of the great light it made in the recent campaign for Democratic principles and the Democratic ticket. Hence the Free Silver men everywhere should rally to its support by sending in their subscription and inducing others to subscribe.

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**Stop**

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**DR. BELL'S Pine-Tar-Honey**

contains the concentrated healing virtues of old and tried medicinal agents, extracted by a new scientific process. 25c, 50c and \$1.00.

At all druggists, or sent upon receipt of money by The E. K. Sutherland Medicine Co., Philadelphia, Pa.

**Bewleyville.**

Held over from last week.

There is at present plenty of rain and mud.

Glen Hardaway attended meeting at Big Spring Sunday night.

The Epworth League held a devotional meeting Sunday night.

Bro. Smith's remarks on temperance were always to the point and we feel that we need to wake up on this subject.

Hon. Chas. Blanford left Wednesday for Frankfort.

Miss Mary Richardson, who has been visiting Miss Mary Blanford the past two weeks, returned home Saturday.

Our Missionary Society did well this quarter, but there are enough who do not help us to more than double our contributions. The next meeting will be Wednesday p. m. before the fourth Sunday, at the home of our President, Mrs. Blanford.

The Bewleyville wing of the Irvington Bay View Circle, attended the meeting of the same held in the Baptist church over there Thursday the 4th p. m. A good crowd was assembled, which we believe were entertained nicely. But the return home, well truly the "rain descended." I give my support when I can, and my well wishes always to enterprises of this kind.

The protracted meeting at this place closed Sunday Mar. 14th. It was conducted by Bro. J. J. Smith, Prather, and Denton, who are noble, courageous workers and they have done a great work for Bewleyville. Not that many have been converted, but there has been a spiritual uplift such as we do not often have. The meeting increased in interest all the while and it seemed almost wrong to quit when it closed.

**Dangers of the Grip.**

The greatest danger from La Grippe is of its resulting in pneumonia. If reasonable care is used, however, and Chamberlain's Cough Remedy taken, all danger will be avoided. Among the tens of thousands who have used this remedy for la grippe, we have yet to learn of a single case having resulted in pneumonia, which shows conclusively that this remedy is a certain preventive of that dread disease. It will effect a permanent cure in less time than any other treatment. The 25 and 50 cent sizes for sale by A. R. Fisher, Druggist.

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**B. & O. S. W. R. Y.**

**TIME TABLE.**

Trains leave Louisville as follows:

**B. & O. S. W. R. Y. CINCINNATI and the East; St. Louis and the West:**

No. 20, No. 16, No. 18.

Lo. Louisville, . . . 2:30pm . . . 8:20am

Ar. Cincinnati, . . . 8:20am . . . 2:30pm

Ar. Columbus, . . . 11:15am . . . 5:15pm

Ar. Pittsburgh, . . . 8:20pm . . . 7:20am

Ar. Washington, . . . 6:50am . . . 10:00am

Ar. Baltimore, . . . 7:00am . . . 10:00am

Ar. Philadelphia, . . . 10:20am . . . 10:00am

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